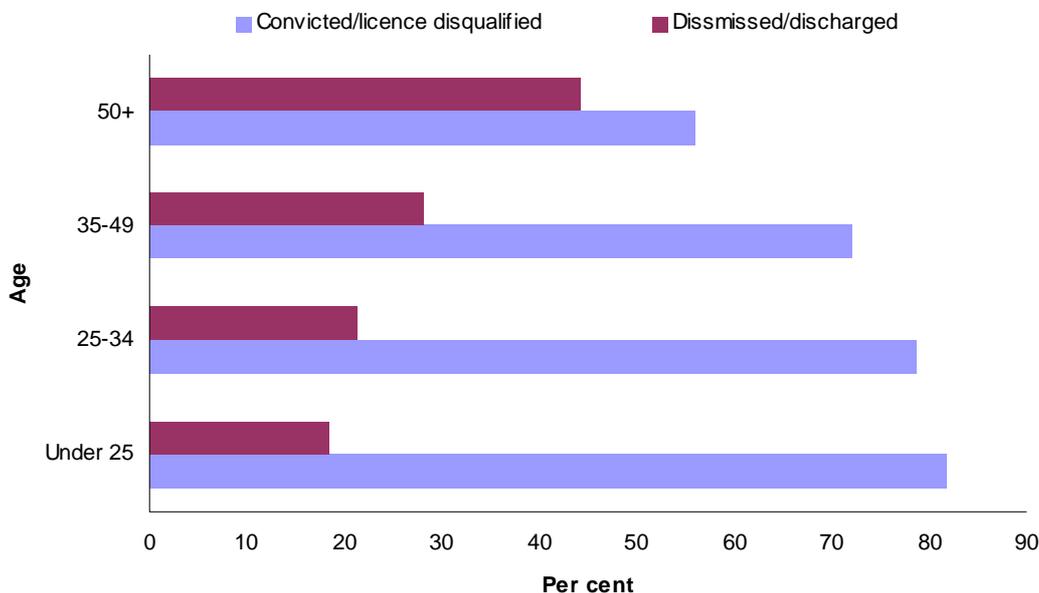


Sentencing of drink-drivers in NSW

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has recently released a study examining the sentencing outcomes of offenders charged with drink driving. The study found that while the annual number of drink driving offences has remained stable, the use of dismissals and conditional discharges (for example, good behaviour bond) has increased sharply over the past 10 years (1993–2002). In contrast, the number of drink driving offenders to be convicted/have their licence disqualified has decreased over the same 10-year period. However, it was noted that the rate of use of dismissals and conditional discharges varies markedly across Local Courts. The study also highlights the importance of gender and age on sentencing outcomes — even after controlling for prior record and offence seriousness. Females are significantly more likely to have their case dismissed or conditionally discharged than males (37.8% of females compared with 22.9% of males). Similarly, the likelihood of receiving a dismissal or conditional discharge increases with age — younger offenders are more likely to be convicted/have their licence disqualified than any other age group, especially those over 49 (81.7% of under 25's compared with 55.9% of over 50's).

Dismissal/conditional discharge and convicted rate (%) for drink driving offenders by age, 2002



SOURCE: New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research 2004. *Sentencing drink-drivers: the use of dismissals and conditional discharges*. Crime and justice bulletin no 81 BOCSAR, Sydney

Main findings available on the BOCSAR web site: <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocsar>

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